



CREATE BRIDGES

Module 3: CREATE Forum
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MODULE: CREATE FORUM..... 2

 OVERVIEW 2

 BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW 4

 TIMELINE..... 6

 PURPOSE 7

 GOAL SETTING 8

 PREPARATION & NOTES 9

 PROMOTION 11

 PROCESS & FORMAT DESCRIPTION 12

 PRESENTATION SESSION..... 13

 RESOURCES 59

 NEXT STEPS 60

 APPENDIX..... 61



MODULE: CREATE FORUM

OVERVIEW

Background & Overview

The CREATE Forum is the third activity outlined in the CREATE BRIDGES process after 1) a regional steering committee has been formed to spearhead activity and leadership in the region and 2) the regional steering committee has conducted a Resource Listing cataloging the CREATE Sector businesses, organizations that support CREATE Sector workforce and businesses, and other community assets that may benefit the CREATE Sectors.

Timeline: From preparation through completion, this step in the CREATE BRIDGES process takes approximately 6 to 8 weeks to complete.

Purpose: The CREATE Forum event is an opportunity to engage the broader community, raise awareness of the CREATE BRIDGES initiative, and encourage participants to continue their involvement with the effort after the event.

Goal Setting: The Regional Steering Committee should establish participation goals as appropriate for their region to engage relevant stakeholders and build support for the initiative.

Preparation and Notes:

- Establish a location, date, and time for the event(s).
- Develop an invitation list and send out invitations
- Prepare and share publicity and outreach for the event
- Prepare regional data sets for insertion into the CREATE Forum PowerPoint Presentation slide deck
- Create wall posters for the Resource Listing exercise
- Prepare other materials and handouts as needed

Promotion:

- Personal invitations
- Email invites
- Social media
- Radio ads
- Newspaper articles

Process and Format Description:

- In-person is the preferred format for the CREATE Forum event(s). The Forum is a mix of lecture-style presentation with interactive audience discussion and participation.

Presentation Session:

- Estimated Time to Complete Session: 3 hours
- Materials / Equipment Needed:
 - CREATE Forum Sign in Sheet
 - Pens / Pencils / Note Paper
 - CREATE Forum Resource Listing Wall Posters
 - Markers, Flip Chart Paper, Easel Stands
 - CREATE Forum Table Facilitator Discussion Questions Page
 - Computer, Projector and Screen
 - CREATE Forum PowerPoint Presentation
 - CREATE Forum Evaluation
 - CREATE Forum Future Involvement Sign Up Sheet
 - Food / Refreshments
 - Round Tables to Facilitate Group Discussion

Resources:

- CREATE Forum Sign in Sheet
- CREATE Forum Table Facilitator Discussion Questions Page
- CREATE Forum Evaluation
- CREATE Forum Future Involvement Sign Up Sheet
- CREATE Forum Event Preparation Checklist
- CREATE Forum Invitation Template
- CREATE Forum Presentation Slides
- CREATE Forum Resource Listing Wall Template Blank
- Business and Resource Listing Wall Activity Examples
- CREATE Forum Evaluation Checklist

Next Steps:

- Send out a copy of the CREATE Forum PowerPoint Presentation to participants after the event.
- Compile the CREATE Forum session notes into a CREATE Forum Summary Report and send a copy to Regional Steering Committee Members and CREATE Forum participants
- Follow-up with CREATE Forum participants that completed the CREATE Forum Future Involvement Form
- Prepare to transition to the next phase in the CREATE BRIDGES process – Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E), Workforce Development and Employee Engagement.

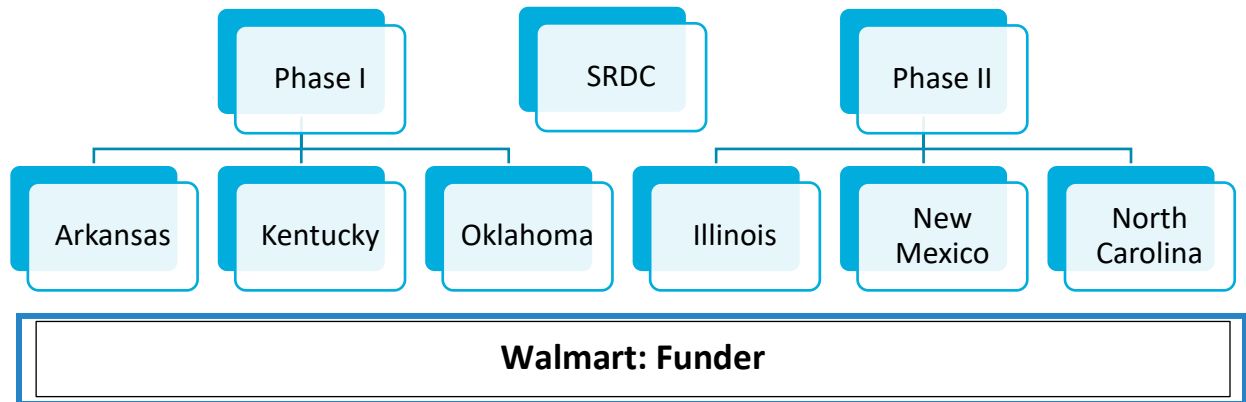
Appendix:

BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW

The CREATE Forum is the third activity outlined in the CREATE BRIDGES process after 1) a regional steering committee has been formed to spearhead activity and leadership in the region and 2) the regional steering committee has conducted a Resource Listing cataloging the CREATE Sector businesses, organizations that support CREATE Sector businesses and workforce, and other community assets that may benefit the CREATE Sectors.

The CREATE Forum event is designed to engage a broader segment of the community including elected leaders, CREATE Sector business owners, and representatives from education, workforce, and civic organizations to help inform the CREATE BRIDGES process. During the event, CREATE Forum participants will contribute to group discussions on why CREATE Sector businesses matter, add to the CREATE BRIDGES Resource Listing, and assist the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) members in exploring the strengths, challenges, and opportunities that exist for the CREATE BRIDGES initiative. The information gathered from the CREATE Forum participants during the CREATE Forum event will inform the RSC members as they prepare to gather information from businesses and workers and undertake the CREATE Academy.

Project Structure:



Pilot Project Partner Institutions:

Project Coordinator



Phase I



**OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION SERVICE**



**College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment**
Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky

Phase II



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



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Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and should not be construed to represent any official USDA or U.S. Government determination or policy.

TIMELINE

From the beginning of CREATE Forum preparation through to completion of the CREATE Forum event(s) and the preparation of the CREATE Forum summary report, this step in the CREATE BRIDGES process takes approximately 6 to 8 weeks to complete.

Preparation: 1-2 Weeks

Promotion: 4-5 Weeks

CREATE Forum Event(s): 3 hours/per event

Next Steps: 1 Week

Total: 6-8 Weeks

PURPOSE

The CREATE Forum event is an opportunity to engage the broader community on the CREATE BRIDGES initiative. As the event casts a wider net beyond RSC membership, it also raises awareness of the CREATE BRIDGES initiative within the community / region and encourages participants to continue their involvement with the effort after the CREATE Forum.

During the CREATE Forum, participants will:

- Explore what CREATE BRIDGES is
- Learn who is involved with the CREATE BRIDGES initiative
- Understand the purpose and process of CREATE BRIDGES
- Contribute to a discussion on why CREATE Sector businesses matter
- Understand how the CREATE Sectors impact the region economically
- Contribute to the Resource Listing
- Participate in three rounds of group discussion on: strengths, challenges, & opportunities
- Learn how they can become involved in the initiative moving forward
- Understand next steps

GOAL SETTING

The CREATE Forum is incorporated into the CREATE BRIDGES process because it provides the RSC with an opportunity to engage members of the broader community in the initiative. Therefore, participation is key to the success of the event.

RSC members should establish participation goals as appropriate for their region. Examples may include: XX participants from each county included in the CREATE BRIDGES initiative; and representation from each of the following community segments - local elected officials, community leaders, CREATE Sector business owners, K-16 education, workforce development, workforce, and civic organizations.

PREPARATION & NOTES

Scheduling the Event - Before the CREATE Forum event, the project coordinator, and any other program facilitators (which may include a committee comprised of Extension Team Members and RSC Co-Chairs / RSC Members) need to establish a location, date, and time, and arrange for food and event sponsors.

Program facilitators may want to consider hosting one large event in a centralized location or schedule several smaller CREATE Forum events at locations throughout the CREATE BRIDGES region. To better facilitate group dynamics / group discussions during the CREATE Forum event, large meeting rooms with space for the attendees to walk around / mingle are preferred, as our meeting spaces that offer round tables that better facilitate group discussions as opposed to auditorium-style seating. Similarly, the round table meeting set-up is much preferred for events that include food and other refreshments.

If several smaller CREATE Forum events are scheduled, program facilitators may want to consider hosting the events at different times of the day (morning, afternoon, or evening) and on different days of the week to better accommodate the schedules of anticipated participants, such as CREATE Sector business owners.

NOTE: REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE CAN BE VERY HELPFUL IN SCHEDULING THESE TYPES OF EVENTS, AS THE REGION MAY HAVE PAST SUCCESS HOSTING EVENTS DURING CERTAIN TIME FRAMES SUCH AS BREAKFAST MEETINGS, LUNCHEONS, DINNERS, ETC.

If possible, consider providing childcare during the CREATE Forum events.

Preparing for the CREATE Forum – Once the venue, date, and time have been established, program facilitators should determine the audience for the event, share publicity and outreach, prepare regional data sets, create wall posters for the resource listing exercise, and prepare materials and handouts, as needed, for the CREATE Forum event.

Who should attend:

- CREATE BRIDGES Regional Steering Committee members
- Local elected officials
- Community leaders
- CREATE Sector business owners
- Education (K-16)
- Workforce and economic development professionals
- CREATE Sector workers
- Civic organizations

Prior to hosting the CREATE Forum event, program facilitators should prepare regional data sets for insertion into the CREATE Forum PowerPoint presentation slide deck. These data sets should help CREATE Forum participants understand the role that CREATE Sector businesses and their workforce play in the regional economy. Examples and suggested data resources are included in the CREATE Forum PowerPoint presentation slide deck.

Prior to hosting the CREATE Forum event, program facilitators should create wall posters for the Resource Listing exercise. The initial Resource Listing exercise will be completed by the CREATE BRIDGES RSC members prior to the CREATE Forum event. During the CREATE Forum event, the focus turns to garnering input from the CREATE Forum participants on additional resources not yet identified that can assist the CREATE Sector workforce and businesses in the region. The wall posters used during the CREATE Forum event should include information from the lists created by the CREATE BRIDGES RSC Members along with space for the CREATE Forum participants to add new content.

A CREATE Forum Resource Listing Wall Template is provided, however, you are free to use another Resource Listing template, if you prefer.

Prior to hosting the event, program facilitators should print copies of the following additional materials (as needed):

- CREATE Forum Sign in Sheet
- CREATE Forum Evaluation
- CREATE Forum Future Involvement Sign Up Sheet
- CREATE Forum Table Facilitator Discussion Questions Page

PROMOTION

Event promotion is crucial to success. Publicity and outreach can take many forms from traditional mailed correspondence to email to social media to radio ads and newspaper articles. While all can be important in reaching the CREATE Forum target audience, outreach is often most successful if the invitees receive a personal invitation to participate, so encourage your CREATE BRIDGES RSC members to generate a list of potential attendees and decide who will contact the individuals on the list.

An event registration process is suggested, as it will assist the event host in determining the need for tables, chairs, food and other refreshments, supplies, handouts, or breakout rooms (if held virtually).

A CREATE Forum Invitation Template is provided, however, you are free to use another invitation template, if you prefer.

PROCESS & FORMAT DESCRIPTION

In-person is the preferred format for the CREATE Forum event(s) as it encourages more collaborative participation and facilitates more successful communication. Plus, there is value in having people together in the same room as it encourages networking and conversations that are not possible in the virtual environment.

However, virtual meetings are now an acceptable alternative to in-person events. During the pandemic period of the CREATE BRIDGES pilot initiative, CREATE Forum events were hosted successfully using the virtual (Zoom) meeting platform.

A hybrid format for the CREATE Forum events is also possible, as a region might decide to host one large in-person event, followed by a series of virtual meetings to capture participation from people who were unable to participate in the in-person event.

NOTE: FOR MANY OF US, “ZOOM” OR OTHER VIRTUAL MEETING PLATFORMS HAVE BECOME THE NORM, HOWEVER, AS PROGRAM FACILITATORS, WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT SOME CREATE FORUM INVITEES MAY NOT BE FAMILIAR WITH THE VIRTUAL MEETING PLATFORM OR MAY NEED ASSISTANCE IN GETTING STARTED, BEING SEEN, AND BEING HEARD, NAVIGATING BREAKOUT ROOMS AND/OR WHITEBOARD TECHNOLOGIES, ETC.

PRESENTATION SESSION

Event Set-up:

- The CREATE Forum Sign in Sheet (with pens or pencils) should be available as attendees enter the meeting room.
- Program facilitators may want to consider some type of seating arrangements for the CREATE Forum event to encourage attendees to reach outside their comfort zone and sit with people they do not know. Alternately, if being held virtually, program facilitators should consider the composition of attendees in the breakout rooms for the Group Discussion section of the program.
- The prepared CREATE Forum Resource Listing wall posters should be displayed on flip charts / easel stands or attached to the walls using a removable adhesive. If forum is virtual, use screen sharing options to display and add to lists in Word, Excel, or another online document.
- Markers (ensure that markers will not bleed through onto walls) should be readily available for participants' use during the Resource Listing activity.
- Table facilitators should each have a copy of the CREATE Forum Table Facilitator Discussion Questions Page to assist them in leading the table discussion during the Why do CREATE Sector Businesses Matter activity.
- Flip chart paper, markers, and perhaps easel stands (or paper and pens) should be readily available for participants' (and/or scribes) use at each of the tables during the three Group Discussion rounds.
- Note pads and pens are suggested for each table for use during the event's activities and for completion of the CREATE Forum Evaluation and CREATE Forum Future Involvement Sign Up Sheet.
- Computer, projector, and screen setup for the CREATE Forum PowerPoint Presentation.
- Estimated time for the CREATE Forum event – 3 hours (including food, refreshments, and short breaks)
- While specific meal or break times are not factored in to the CREATE Forum PowerPoint Presentation timeline, based on best estimates for program delivery, facilitators suggest having food available as participants enter the event then letting them eat while the program facilitators start the program or announcing that the food will be available before the start of the meeting, so the participants are finished eating before the first group discussion activity – Why do CREATE Sector businesses matter. In the absence of an official break time, facilitators suggest utilizing the time frame of the Resource Listing activity (just under halfway through the presentation timeline) as a time to incorporate a short refreshment and/or bathroom break as participants are already up from their seats.

- Program facilitators should review the CREATE Forum Event Preparation Checklist for a more complete list of items needed for the CREATE Forum event. All documents can be found in the Appendix.

As needed or required, it is recommended that you take pictures of CREATE Forum Event participants as they participate in the event's activities. **NOTE: ORGANIZATION SPECIFIC PHOTO RELEASES MAY BE REQUIRED.**

Slide 1**INSTRUCTIONS**

Use this slide as the Welcome to the CREATE Forum event.

Have this slide up when participants join the session.

Insert region-specific details on this and/or additional slides immediately following this slide.

NOTE: SUCCESS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS BEST ATTAINED WHEN PARTICIPANTS ARE INTRODUCED TO OTHERS THAT PERHAPS LIVE IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES OR HAVE DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS. WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE CONSIDER ENCOURAGING CREATE FORUM ATTENDEES TO REACH OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE AND SIT WITH PEOPLE THAT THEY DO NOT KNOW.

Alternately, if the event is held virtually, program facilitators should consider the composition of attendees in the breakout rooms for the Group Discussion section of the program.



SLIDE #1

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 2

INSTRUCTIONS

Share this acknowledgment of the partnerships with CREATE BRIDGES.

Acknowledgements



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SLIDE #2

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 3

INSTRUCTIONS

Many at this meeting may be familiar with CREATE BRIDGES, but there may be some that are new to the concept, so take a few minutes during the CREATE Forum event to introduce CREATE BRIDGES and review the project purpose.

CREATE BRIDGES stands for: Celebrating REtail, Accommodations, Tourism and Entertainment by Building Rural Innovations and Developing Growth Economies

The CREATE BRIDGES pilot team recognized that while manufacturing and professional services are often the focus of economic development efforts; businesses in retail, accommodations, tourism, and entertainment are important to the viability of communities and regions.

These businesses provide needed goods, services, and amenities to residents and visitors. In addition, they are often a major source of tax revenue, and the jobs associated with these businesses are an important source of employment in rural areas.

In addition, these businesses play an important role in ensuring that rural communities remain vibrant places for people to live, work, play, and visit.

As a result, the CREATE BRIDGES pilot team set out to develop a process to strengthen the service sectors in rural regions.

What is CREATE BRIDGES?



Stands for:

Celebrating REtail, Accommodations,
Tourism, and Entertainment by
Building Rural Innovations and Developing
Growth Economies

SLIDE #3

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE



Slide 4

INSTRUCTIONS

Take a few minutes to introduce the CREATE BRIDGES leadership team, Regional and State Partner Organizations, Regional Co-Chairs and Regional Steering Committee (RSC) members.

Optional slides are provided to facilitate the introductions of the various members of the team supporting the initiative.

Introductions of the various people involved with the CREATE BRIDGES initiative helps the CREATE Forum participants to understand who is involved with the effort.

NOTE: THE TIME THAT CAN BE DEDICATED TO CREATE BRIDGES TEAM MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THE CREATE FORUM AUDIENCE SIZE AND ANY OTHER TIME CONSTRAINTS.



CREATE BRIDGES Team Member Introductions

SLIDE #4

TIME: 8 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE



Slide 5

INSTRUCTIONS

Optional slide to acknowledge the University Extension project team. Insert pictures, names, job titles, roles, etc., as applicable.

Include introductions or acknowledgements of the Extension project team as you deem fit.

CREATE BRIDGES
Extension Project Team



SLIDE #5

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE



Slide 6

INSTRUCTIONS

Optional slide to acknowledge the regional and state partner organizations involved in the regional CREATE BRIDGES project. Insert logos, pictures, names, job titles, roles, etc., as applicable.

Include introductions or acknowledgements as you deem fit.

Introductions or acknowledgements of those involved with the CREATE BRIDGES initiative at the state and regional level lends credibility to the effort and demonstrates an overall commitment to the process and helps the CREATE Forum participants understand the importance of their contributions to the event.



SLIDE #6

TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE



Slide 7**INSTRUCTIONS**

Optional slide to acknowledge the Regional Steering Committee Co-Chairs involved in the CREATE BRIDGES project. Insert pictures, logos, names, job titles, roles, etc., as applicable.

Include introductions or acknowledgements as you deem fit.

Introductions or acknowledgements of those involved with the CREATE BRIDGES initiative lends credibility to the effort and demonstrates an overall commitment to the process and helps the CREATE Forum participants understand the importance of their contributions to the event.



CREATE BRIDGES
Regional Co-Chairs



SLIDE #7

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 8

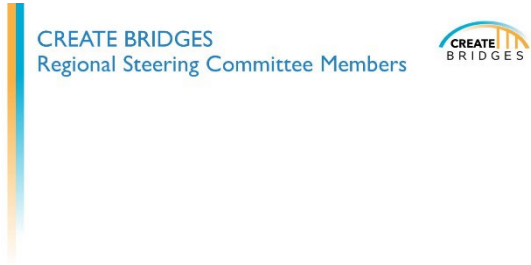
INSTRUCTIONS

Optional slide to acknowledge the Regional Steering Committee members involved in the CREATE BRIDGES project.

If working on a multi-county project, you might outline the names of the Regional Steering Committee members by county represented. Alternately, you could insert pictures of each of the Regional Steering Committee members on this slide.

Include introductions or acknowledgements of the Regional Steering Committee members as you deem fit.

Introductions or acknowledgements of those involved with the regional CREATE BRIDGES initiative lends credibility to the effort and demonstrates an overall commitment to the process and helps the CREATE Forum participants understand the importance of their contributions to the event.



SLIDE #8

TIME: 4 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 9**INSTRUCTIONS**

Take a few minutes for introductions of the CREATE Forum attendees.



Also determine by show of hands “Who is a business owner? Who is an elected official? Who works in education? Who works in retail; tourism; accommodations; entertainment? Who is a community member who is interested in supporting growth in their area?”

Alt for Virtual Sessions: Instead of a “show of hands,” you could have participants type these responses in the chat. If you choose to use show of hands, keep in mind there may be a slight delay due to slow connections and allow a pause between questions.

Take this opportunity to mention the CREATE Forum Future Involvement Form where community members can indicate how they would like to be involved with CREATE BRIDGES.

NOTE: THE TIME THAT CAN BE DEDICATED TO CREATE FORUM ATTENDEE INTRODUCTIONS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THE CREATE FORUM AUDIENCE SIZE AND ANY OTHER TIME CONSTRAINTS

CREATE Forum Attendee Introductions
SLIDE #9**TIME: 10 MINUTES****MATERIALS: FUTURE INVOLVEMENT FORM****HANDOUTS: NONE**

Slide 10

INSTRUCTIONS

Optional slide to acknowledge donations of Food, Meeting Space, and/or other contributions as applicable.

Thank you to our sponsors!



SLIDE #10

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE



Slide 11

INSTRUCTIONS

Briefly go over the agenda so that participants get a sense of what to expect from the forum. Explain that the process is interactive and encourage each person to share their thoughts as the event progresses.

You may also wish to add times and explain that the times are tentative as every group works at a different rate. Or you may wish to leave times off and just list the topics. Either way, having a printed agenda is not recommended as people may feel too tied to the clock.

Welcome & Introductions	
Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional • Retail • Process 	
Resource Listing Activity	
Round Table Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round 1: Strengths • Round 2: Challenges • Round 3: Opportunities 	
Next Steps & Concluding Remarks	

Agenda

SLIDE #11

TIME: 2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 12

INSTRUCTIONS

Review the Purpose of CREATE BRIDGES

- 1. **Raise awareness** of the role retail, accommodations, tourism, and entertainment businesses play in the local workforce and economy
- 2. **Determine challenges, barriers, and opportunities** related to those businesses
- 3. **Develop and implement strategies** to strengthen the retail, accommodations, tourism, and entertainment sectors within a region.

Purpose of CREATE BRIDGES



- 1. **Raise awareness**
- 2. **Determine challenges, barriers, and opportunities**
- 3. **Develop and implement strategies**

SLIDE #12

TIME: 2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE



Slide 13

INSTRUCTIONS

Explain the CREATE BRIDGES process

The first step in CREATE BRIDGES was to form a **Regional Steering Committee (RSC)** to spearhead activity and leadership in the region. The first assignment of the Regional Steering Committee was to develop a **Resource Listing**. This assignment included cataloguing a list of CREATE sector businesses, organizations that support CREATE businesses and workforce members, and any other community assets that may benefit the CREATE sector. More detail on the Resource Listing will be provided later in today's forum.

The **CREATE BRIDGES Forum** (the current stage in the process) provides an opportunity for local community members and partners to engage in the CREATE BRIDGES process. This event brings in stakeholders beyond the RSC, provides opportunity for networking and engagement, and gives others a voice and investment in the project.

During this event, we convene partners to explore opportunities and challenges in the CREATE sectors. The CREATE forum is a guided 3-hour discussion which will enhance the Resource Listing by breaking the room into groups of 8-10 and initiating brainstorming around CREATE businesses and workforce training.

The next phase consists of a Business Retention and Expansion focus as well as a workforce focus that involves collaborating with workforce development organizations and engaging employees. Together these components provide support for both employers and employees.

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program will focus on small group and individual meetings with business owners/managers; understanding business roles, needs, and changes; gathering information to assess opportunities, threats, and barriers; and analyzing and reporting the findings. Information gathered during this phase will be aggregated and analyzed to identify common themes and a report summarizing workforce perspective and opportunities will be produced. This information will be used to develop new strategies and actions in the final phase.



SLIDE #13

TIME: 5-8 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

For **employee engagement**, CREATE BRIDGES will also initiate conversations with current employees within the regions. Employees will be engaged in conversations within safe environments (for pilot regions, this happened through a paper or online survey) and asked a series of questions about their work experience as employees. A brief, base survey will be provided by the national CREATE BRIDGES team, with RSCs potentially adding other questions appropriate for their region.

Following the BR&E and Employee engagement phase is a **CREATE Academy** for the RSC members to provide region specific data regarding CREATE sectors. The CREATE Academy is a data-driven process that uses brainstorming exercises to generate ideas. The process centers around small group discussions and extensive exploration of data related to economic development in the region. The goal of the CREATE Academy is to identify potential barriers and opportunities to supporting business owners/managers and workers in the region.

Taking action on new strategies to support CREATE sectors is the final phase of CREATE BRIDGES. During review and planning sessions, feedback from workforce participants and business collaborators will be analyzed. The RSC will brainstorm ideas to better support CREATE businesses and workers in the region. Feedback and brainstorming ideas will then be synthesized and used to identify short-, medium-, and long-term goals and strategies which will be used to develop a joint plan of action.

During this time, gaps and opportunities for growth that were identified in the employee engagement and business retention and expansion phases will be taken into consideration and used to develop or adopt new, region-appropriate programs and trainings.

The overall goal of this phase is to develop sustainable actions that create positive change in the local workforce and business environments.

Slide 14

INSTRUCTIONS

Describe the advantages to working as a region instead of individual cities or counties.

A regional approach:

- Provides an ideal number of business and workforce participants
- Allows regions to pool resources and build partnerships
- Increases the likelihood of economic development progress

“Regional approaches align with regional needs for employers and workforce development. It is a way of approaching interventions at a manageable scale that makes it applicable to many businesses in the participating regions.” – Dan Kahl, CEDIK, University of Kentucky

Regional Approach



- Ideal number of participants
- Shared resources and partnerships
- Increased likelihood of economic development progress

SLIDE #14

TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

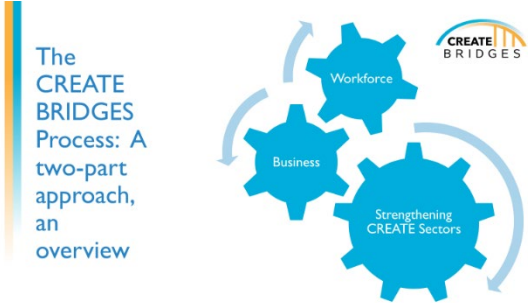
HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 15

INSTRUCTIONS

The CREATE BRIDGES initiative will take a two-part approach to development. One portion of the program will focus on business development while the other will focus on workforce development.

Our goal is for these two approaches to work together to strengthen the CREATE sectors in the region.



The CREATE BRIDGES Process: A two-part approach, an overview

SLIDE #15

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 16

INSTRUCTIONS

This program segment will engage with CREATE businesses in the region to inform strategy development. This may be the first time anyone has ever asked business owners or managers about their goals and challenges they are facing.

To accomplish this, the RSC will launch a Business Retention & Expansion program to:

- Meet with business owners/managers
- Understand business goals, needs, and changes
- Assess challenges, barriers, and opportunities

Data gathered through this process will inform new regional strategies and actions to better support local CREATE businesses.

Businesses

Conduct the Business Retention & Expansion program

- Meet with business owners/managers
- Understand business roles needs and changes
- Assess challenges, barriers, and opportunities

Develop new strategies and actions to support local businesses




SLIDE #16

TIME: 2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 17

INSTRUCTIONS

This program segment engages with people working in CREATE businesses to better understand their goals and challenges they are facing.

To accomplish this, the RSC will:

- Initiate conversations with workforce development personnel
 - Conduct an employee perspectives survey
 - Assess challenges, barriers and opportunities
- Identify gaps in existing training programs

Data gathered through this process will inform new strategies and actions to support the local workforce and fill training gaps.

Conduct Employee Perspectives Survey:

- Initiate conversations with workforce personnel
- Conduct survey with employees
- Assess challenges, barriers, and opportunities

Identify gaps in existing training programs

Develop new strategies and actions to support the local workforce and fill training gaps



SLIDE #17

TIME: 3 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 18**INSTRUCTIONS**

What is the role of CREATE industries/amenities in the region?



Discuss concepts including quality of life, community place-making, economic benefits from industry, linkages between residents/workforce/businesses.

Why do CREATE sector businesses matter?

How does retail fit within the larger regional economy?

SLIDE #18

Here are discussion question ideas to get participants thinking about this:

TIME: 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of CREATE industries/amenities in the region?
2. What is the quality of life in your region? What adds to this? How do CREATE industries/amenities contribute to this quality of life?
3. What are the social, political, and economic hubs within the community and how do CREATE sectors contribute to those?
4. How might CREATE sectors contribute to community placemaking?
5. In this region, what are the economic benefits of CREATE sectors?
6. How do residents, workforce, and businesses connect to and depend on each other?
7. How do CREATE sectors fit into the larger, regional economy?

HANDOUTS: NONE

Distribute discussion questions as a card on each table (if desired) or as a discussion question slide. Ask the above questions broadly to the participants and provide a few moments for participants to share perspectives, then move into the data on the following slides to illustrate ways CREATE businesses matter to the local economy.

ALT: IN VIRTUAL SESSIONS PARTICIPANTS CAN TYPE RESPONSES TO THESE QUESTIONS INTO THE CHAT. RESPONSE EXAMPLES COULD BE READ ALOUD BY THE FACILITATOR, OR YOU COULD USE THE BREAKOUT ROOM FEATURE FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS SIMILAR TO TABLE DISCUSSIONS.

Slide 19

INSTRUCTIONS

The next several slides highlight the importance of CREATE sectors based on economic data.

According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 5 Industries account for 75% of employment in Rural America:

- Government and Government Enterprises
- Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Retail Trade
- Manufacturing
- Accommodation and Food Services

NOTE THAT RETAIL TRADE AND ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES (TWO OF THE CREATE SECTORS) ARE TWO OF THE TOP 5 INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATED WITH RURAL EMPLOYMENT.



SLIDE #19

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

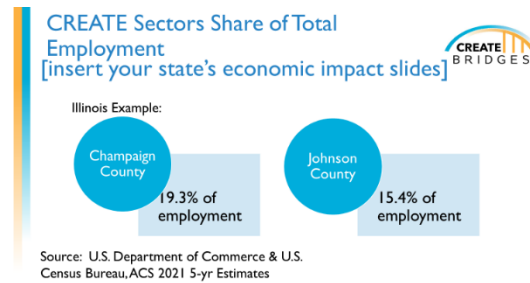
Slide 20

INSTRUCTIONS

Zach Kennedy with University of Illinois Extension has provided an example and instructions on how to replicate the following information for your CREATE BRIDGES region and/or county.

Instructions:

1. Visit Headwaters Economics and download the demographic data report for your counties in Excel format: <https://headwaterseconomics.org/apps/economic-profile-system/>
2. Sum the employment numbers for the Retail Trade (column D, row 29) and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Accommodation and Food Services (column D, row 35) found on worksheet "8" in the demographic report Excel workbook.
3. Divide this sum by the total civilian employees (column D, row 24) to derive the share of total employment in the CREATE sectors.



SLIDE #20

TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Check if the data source citation on the example slide is still accurate or if the American Community Survey (ACS) year needs to be updated.

NOTE: DATA NOVICES WILL MOST LIKELY NOT BE ABLE TO REPRODUCE THESE SLIDES, SO THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR MAY NEED TO CONSULT SOMEONE WITHIN THEIR ORGANIZATION WITH SOME LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH ECONOMIC DATA SETS.

Example talking points:

- Report the share of CREATE sectors in terms of total employment. This shows the importance of the sectors in terms of providing job opportunities within the region.
- Compare the share of CREATE sector employments between the region's counties. Highlight which counties have the highest proportion of jobs in the sector.

Example discussion questions:

1. **How do you think the growth of jobs in these sectors impacts the overall community well-being, beyond just employment numbers?**

- This question encourages participants to think about the broader implications of job growth, such as improved quality of life, community engagement, and cultural enrichment.

2. In what ways can local businesses and policymakers collaborate to enhance job opportunities in these sectors while also ensuring sustainable economic development?

- This question prompts discussions about practical strategies, potential collaborations, and policies that can support the growth of these industries while considering long-term economic and environmental sustainability.

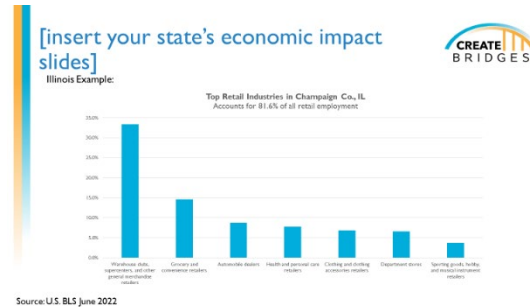
3. What role do you think technology and innovation play in shaping the future of jobs within these sectors, and how can local workforce development programs adapt to these changes?

- This question focuses on the impact of technology on job roles, skill requirements, and the need for continuous education and training. Participants can brainstorm ideas on how educational institutions and training programs can stay ahead of industry trends to prepare the local workforce effectively.

Slide 21

INSTRUCTIONS

Zach Kennedy with University of Illinois Extension has provided an example and instructions on how to replicate the following information for your CREATE BRIDGES region and/or county.



Instructions:

1. Visit:
https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/data_views/data_views.htm#tab=Tables
2. Select “NAICS 4-digit industries, one area”
3. Choose your county (repeat and sum later as necessary if working in a region)
4. On the results screen type “NAICS 44” in the “Table Filter” field
5. Copy the resulting table into a blank Excel workbook
6. Type “NAICS 45” in the “Table Filter” field
7. Copy and paste the results underneath the NAICS 44 results
8. You now have a workbook with the 4-digit retail employment levels
9. Sort the industries in the workbook in descending order by employment
10. Calculate these industries’ share of total retail employment
11. Create a bar graph of the top 7 retail industries and label (or all industries if your county has fewer than 7 4-digit industries)
12. Repeat for Arts and Entertainment and Accommodation and Food Services industries if desired
13. Update the citation as necessary to include the correct data vintage date

SLIDE #21

TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Example talking points:

- Compare the 4-digit employment levels across the counties in the region. Note to the audience if there is a consistent story regarding which 4-digit retail sectors supply the most jobs across the region’s counties. Highlight any counties which are outliers in terms of having a high proportion of jobs in a retail sector which the other counties do not.

Example Discussion Questions:

1. **Which specific factors do you think contribute to the high employment levels in the top industries within the Retail sector, and how can other industries learn from their success in generating jobs?**

- This question encourages participants to analyze the unique qualities and strategies of the leading industries in the Retail sector. Discussing these factors can provide valuable insights for other sectors and businesses looking to boost employment opportunities in the region.

2. Considering the top 4-digit NAICS industries in the Retail sector, how might changes in consumer behavior and preferences impact future employment trends? What adaptations do you think businesses in these industries need to make to stay relevant and continue creating jobs?

- This question prompts discussions about the evolving nature of consumer demands and its influence on employment patterns. Participants can brainstorm ideas about how businesses should adapt, innovate, and invest in their workforce to meet changing consumer needs.

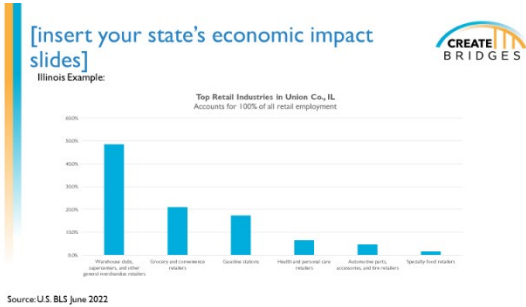
3. In what ways can local communities and educational institutions collaborate with businesses in the leading industries of the Retail sector to provide specialized training and support for the workforce, ensuring that employees have the necessary skills for these jobs?

- This question focuses on the importance of community engagement and collaboration between businesses, local organizations, and educational institutions. Participants can explore potential partnerships and programs that facilitate skill development, ultimately enhancing the employability of individuals within these specific industries in their region.

Slide 22

INSTRUCTIONS

Continued from last slide. Highlight the same process and discussion questions.



SLIDE #22

TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 23

INSTRUCTIONS

Zach Kennedy with University of Illinois Extension has provided an example and instructions on how to replicate the following information for your CREATE BRIDGES region and/or county.

Instructions:

1. Use the table created for slides 20 and 2 to calculate and add an average annualized salary from the average weekly salary column by multiplying the value by 52. Sort by employment and report the top industries in a table
2. Repeat for Arts and Entertainment and Accommodation and Food Services industries if desired
3. Update the citation as necessary to include the correct data vintage date

[insert your state's economic impact slides] 

Illinois Example:
Champaign Co., IL

4-Digit Retail Industry	Employment	Average Annual Wage
Warehouse clubs, supercenters, and other general merchandise retailers	2,380	\$ 27,456
Grocery and convenience retailers	1,043	\$ 26,364
Automobile dealers	625	\$ 68,952
Health and personal care retailers	558	\$ 35,724
Clothing and clothing accessories retailers	489	\$ 18,772
Department stores	469	\$ 22,880
Sporting goods, hobby, and musical instrument retailers	267	\$ 26,312

Source: U.S. BLS, June 2022

SLIDE #23

TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Example talking points:

- Contrast high versus low wage retail sectors to the audience if there are differences in the region. Compare the annual average wage in the same retail sectors between different counties within the region. Mention that while retail jobs tend to be low wage, they are still vital to a region's economy. Highlight the fact that the retail sector is particularly important for youth employment. Many people's first job is in retail. While there are fewer high paying jobs in retail, there are some opportunities to advance within retail companies to the store manager level and beyond.

Example discussion questions:

1. **What factors do you think contribute to the variations in average wages across different retail sectors, and how might businesses and policymakers work together to address wage disparities within the retail industry?**
 - This question encourages participants to think critically about the reasons behind wage differences in various sectors of the retail industry. It also prompts discussions about potential strategies and policies that can be implemented to promote fair wages and ensure that employees in all sectors receive adequate compensation for their work.

2. How can businesses within the lower paying retail sectors attract and retain skilled employees despite offering lower average wages? What role can benefits, training programs, and workplace culture play in enhancing the overall job satisfaction and loyalty of employees in these sectors?

- This question focuses on the practical measures that businesses can take to maintain a skilled and motivated workforce, even in sectors with lower average wages. Participants can discuss creative approaches to improve workplace conditions, provide valuable benefits, and establish positive workplace cultures that contribute to employee satisfaction and retention.

Slide 24

INSTRUCTIONS

Optional slides to include other data from your state, such as tourism or sales tax from retail numbers.

[insert your state's economic impact slides] 

SLIDE #24

TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 25

INSTRUCTIONS

Transitional slide—Activity explained in next slide



NOTE: UNLESS YOUR RSC HAD DIFFICULTY, CATALOGUING CREATE SECTOR BUSINESSES FOR THEIR REGION, THE FOCUS OF THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD BE RESOURCES TO THE CREATE SECTOR WORKFORCE AND BUSINESSES IN THE REGION. STILL, INCLUDE THE LIST OF BUSINESSES IN AN ORGANIZED FORMAT, SO THAT CREATE SECTOR BUSINESSES CAN BE ADDED IF NEEDED. IT MAY ALSO BE OF INTEREST TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO SEE HOW MANY BUSINESSES ARE IN THE REGION.

Resource Listing

SLIDE #25

TIME: 1 MINUTE

Also, emphasize that the focus is on the CREATE sectors. Businesses from other sectors may be able to support CREATE sector businesses, but retail, tourism, entertainment, and accommodations are the focus sectors for CREATE BRIDGES.

MATERIALS: RESOURCE LISTING WALL TEMPLATE
(ON FLIP CHART PAPER)

HANDOUTS: NONE

For this activity, you will need large post-its on the wall—pre-filled with resources identified by the RSC, plus space to write-in more resources

ALT: FOR VIRTUAL FORUMS, USE BREAKOUT ROOMS FOR THIS ACTIVITY.

Instead of post-its, have categories and resources typed in a word doc, Excel sheet, PPT slide, etc. Each category can have its own breakout room, and a facilitator for that category can share their screen to display the list. Participants can move between the rooms themselves* and provide verbal or typed suggestions to add to each list.

*For participants to move between the breakout rooms themselves, that feature will need to be enabled ahead of time on Zoom or whatever virtual platform being used. Another alternative is for participants to stay in one breakout group for this activity and have a facilitator rotate through the different resource categories. Duplicate responses can be trimmed later.

Post-its could include these categories:

- Resources relating to Retail
- Resources relating to Accommodations
- Resources relating to Entertainment
- Resources relating to Tourism
- Workforce Training
- Individual Capacities
- Formal and Informal Community Associations
- Community Institutions
- Physical Assets
- Community Leaders and Developers

Alt Supplies:

- Breakout rooms
- Resource lists that can be shared digitally

Slide 26

INSTRUCTIONS

Taking time to identify resources or assets before setting goals in the regions is important because having a good understanding of the breadth of resources available in the region can be a valuable way to determine which opportunities should be pursued as regional goals and which ones should be put on the back burner as priorities given that the required assets are simply not in place. Opportunities where the resources needed are already available may be easier to launch. On the other hand, goals that require absent or underdeveloped assets will require more preparation time and effort for the goals to be successful.

Turn Opportunity Into Reality



SLIDE #26

TIME: 2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 27

INSTRUCTIONS

Be sure to expand upon the types of resources available—grants the region is eligible for, resources in the region not yet utilized, trainings that could be implemented, partnerships, etc. Note that the focus should be on resources that are specifically relevant to CREATE sectors.

This slide can be left up as a reference during the Resource Listing activity which commences after this slide is introduced.

ALT: THIS SLIDE CAN BE LEFT UP IN THE MAIN “MEETING ROOM.” GROUP FACILITATORS CAN ALSO HAVE IT ON HAND TO SHARE IF NEEDED.

Types of resources:

- Individual capacities – community members, Extension staff, faith leaders, community volunteers
- Formal and informal community associations – volunteer organizations, faith-based groups, training, and workforce organizations
- Community institutions – universities, colleges, K-12 schools, not-for-profits, businesses, banks, and lenders
- Physical assets – parks, infrastructure, transportation
- Community leaders and developers – current and potential local leaders and policy makers

Also, consider how relevant the community resources are to businesses, employees, and customers.

NOTE: WHILE NO DESIGNATED BREAK TIME IS OUTLINED FOR THE CREATE FORUM EVENT, DURING THE RESOURCE LISTING ACTIVITY WHEN PEOPLE ARE UP MOVING AROUND, IT MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME TO SUGGEST THAT THEY TAKE A NEEDED REFRESHMENT OR BATHROOM BREAK.

Community Resources

Types of resources:

- **Individual capacities** – community members, Extension staff, faith leaders, community volunteers
- **Formal and informal community associations** – volunteer organizations, faith-based groups, training and workforce organizations
- **Community institutions** – universities, colleges, k-12 schools, not-for-profits, businesses, banks and lenders
- **Physical assets** – parks, infrastructure, transportation
- **Community leaders and developers** – current and potential local leaders and policy makers

How Relevant to:

- **Businesses**
- **Employees**
- **Customers**



SLIDE #27

TIME: 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 28**INSTRUCTIONS**

In this activity, forum attendees will add to the Resource Listing that the RSC has created.

There will be several large post-its spaced around the room, each with a different category of businesses or resources. Attendees will walk around the room, examine the resources listed on each sheet, and add any businesses or resources in the region that are missing from the lists.

ALT: INSTEAD OF POST-ITS, HAVE CATEGORIES AND RESOURCES TYPED IN A WORD DOC, EXCEL SHEET, PPT SLIDE, ETC. EACH CATEGORY CAN HAVE ITS OWN BREAKOUT ROOM, AND A FACILITATOR FOR THAT CATEGORY CAN SHARE THEIR SCREEN TO DISPLAY THE LIST. PARTICIPANTS CAN MOVE BETWEEN THE ROOMS THEMSELVES* AND PROVIDE VERBAL OR TYPED SUGGESTIONS TO ADD TO EACH LIST.

*For participants to move between the breakout rooms themselves, that feature will need to be enabled ahead of time on Zoom or whatever virtual platform being used. Another alternative is for participants to stay in one breakout group for this activity and have a facilitator rotate through the different resource categories. Duplicate responses can be trimmed later. One drawback to this method is that it will be difficult for participants to see what other groups have added. Maybe the synthesized lists could be shared at the end of the forum or emailed to participants afterward.

For this activity, you will need large post-its. These will be grouped in the categories mentioned on the previous slide's instructions. For each category, resources identified by the RSC will be posted. There will also be a blank post-it for listing additional resources. The categories should be scattered around the room to provide space for viewing and writing.

Alt Supplies:

- Breakout rooms
- Resource lists that can be shared digitally

Activity

SLIDE #28

TIME: 2 MINUTES

MATERIALS: RESOURCE LISTING WALL TEMPLATE
(ON FLIP CHART PAPER), LARGE POST-ITS
MARKERS, TIMER

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 29

INSTRUCTIONS

Transition slide to the Group Discussion activity



NOTE: SUCCESS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS BEST ATTAINED WHEN PARTICIPANTS ARE INTRODUCED TO OTHERS THAT PERHAPS LIVE IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES OR HAVE DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, SO, WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE CONSIDER ENCOURAGING CREATE FORUM ATTENDEES TO REACH OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE AND SIT WITH PEOPLE THAT THEY DO NOT KNOW. FOR IN-PERSON EVENTS, A TABLE FACILITATOR WILL BE ASSIGNED TO EACH TABLE.

Group Discussion

SLIDE #29

TIME: 1 MINUTE

Alternately, if the event is held virtually, program facilitators should consider the composition of attendees in the breakout rooms for the Group Discussion section of the program.

MATERIALS: FLIP CHART PAPER & MARKERS FOR EACH TABLE, TIMER

HANDOUTS: NONE

To assure that the table/breakout room conversations are accurately captured, it is important to have a good facilitator who will ensure that input is gathered from all participants, plus, a good scribe who can fully capture the content from the table discussions.

NOTE: FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS, ONE PERSON MAY SERVE BOTH ROLES.

ALT: IF THE CREATE FORUM IS BEING HELD VIA VIRTUALLY, THE FACILITATORS CAN OPT TO RECORD THE DISCUSSIONS IN THE MAIN ROOM AND/OR BREAKOUT ROOMS, WHICH WILL ASSIST THE PROGRAM FACILITATOR IN PREPARING A REPORT OF THE STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED DURING THE EVENT.

While not a requirement, when preparing the CREATE Forum Report, program facilitators may consider reporting on the Strengths identified using the Community Capitals Framework – Natural, Cultural, Human, Social, Political, Built, and Financial. If opting to use this framework for reporting, it may also be helpful to use the framework for developing the Resource Listing during and after the Orientation and for organizing the Resource Listing categories during the CREATE Forum. However, it should be noted that some communities found the framework confusing, so this should be left up to the project coordinator.

ALT: AT THIS POINT, VIRTUAL BREAKOUT ROOM PARTICIPANTS WILL NEED TO BE DIVIDED INTO GROUPS WITH A FACILITATOR FOR EACH GROUP. THESE GROUPS CAN BE SET UP AHEAD OF TIME, CAN BE ASSIGNED ON THE SPOT, OR PARTICIPANTS CAN CHOOSE THE GROUPS THEY GO INTO.

It is recommended that facilitators “test” the breakout room options prior to hosting the first forum event.

For information on managing breakout rooms and breakout room options, view this page.

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313-Managing-Breakout-Rooms>

It is recommended that a facilitator who can take notes be part of each breakout room group. The facilitator’s screen can be shared throughout this round or part-way through.

Slide 30

INSTRUCTIONS

Thinking about the community and the discussion in the forum so far, ask participants to brainstorm a list of the community's greatest strengths.

Facilitators will list the items on a flip chart at each table. Allow about 10-15 minutes for brainstorming.

ALT: FACILITATORS WILL LIST ITEMS IN A WORD DOC AS PARTICIPANTS BRAINSTORM. ALTERNATELY, FACILITATORS COULD USE THE WHITEBOARD FEATURE IN ZOOM SO PARTICIPANTS CAN ADD POST-ITS THEMSELVES AND THEN VOTE USING EMOJIS.

Next, ask each table to identify their top three features and place a star beside each one. Allow 5-10 minutes for identification of these items.

Facilitators may want to consider implementing some type of voting mechanism to ensure that everyone's voice is heard during each of the Three Rounds. For in-person events, the facilitator might implement voting by dots. Strengths with the most votes would become the top three for the group.

ALT: FOR SESSIONS HELD VIRTUALLY, PERHAPS SOME TYPE OF MOBILE VOTING MECHANISM COULD BE UTILIZED, OR THE PARTICIPANTS COULD VOTE USING EMOJIS OR CHECK MARKS IN WHITEBOARD.

Remind facilitators to put their table number on the chart page.

Option 1: Do not do a report out at this time. Rather you will take these up and have a small team synthesize them while the participants continue with the next round. This should be done quietly in the background while tables continue to work on Round Two. The summary should include a listing of the top 3 features ranked in order by the number of tables that identified it as a top 3 feature.

Option 2: Share out opportunities after each Round – have each table report out one Strength and one Challenge.

ALT: FACILITATORS WILL NEED TO SHARE THE SCREEN AT THIS STAGE AT LEAST.

Round 1: Strengths



• Considering the assets outlined, what do you think are the greatest strengths supporting CREATE businesses and their employees in the region?

• Put a ★ by the **THREE** things that your group sees as the most positive features (strengths) of your community.



SLIDE #30

TIME: 30 MINUTES

MATERIALS: FLIP CHART PAPER AND MARKERS
FOR EACH TABLE, TIMER

HANDOUTS: NONE

Facilitators for breakout groups should send their strengths to a designated person to be synthesized. Email or a form of file sharing could be used for this.

Other virtual tools for reporting out include:

- Word doc
- Whiteboard feature in Zoom
- Email or file sharing system

Slide 31**INSTRUCTIONS**

This round will flow similarly to Round 1: Strengths

Thinking about the community, ask participants to brainstorm a list of the community's challenges or barriers.

Facilitators will list the items on a flip chart at each table. Allow about 10-15 minutes for the brainstorming.

ALT: VIRTUAL FACILITATORS WILL LIST ITEMS IN A WORD DOC AS PARTICIPANTS BRAINSTORM.

Next, ask each table to identify their top three biggest challenges and place a star beside each one. Allow 5-10 minutes for identification of these items.

ALT: VIRTUAL FACILITATORS WILL NEED TO SHARE THE SCREEN AT THIS STAGE AT LEAST.

Remind facilitators to put their table number on the chart page.

ALT: FACILITATORS FOR VIRTUAL BREAKOUT GROUPS SHOULD SEND THEIR CHALLENGES TO A DESIGNATED PERSON TO BE SYNTHESIZED. EMAIL OR A FORM OF FILE SHARING COULD BE USED FOR THIS.

Optional: Share out opportunities after each Round – have each table report out one Strength and one Challenge.

Facilitators may want to consider implementing some type of voting mechanism to ensure that everyone's voice is heard during each of the Three Rounds. For in-person events, the facilitator might implement voting by dots.

ALT: FOR SESSIONS HELD VIA VIRTUALLY, SOME TYPE OF MOBILE VOTING COULD BE UTILIZED.

Other optional tools:

- A fresh Word doc
- Email or file sharing system

Round 2: Challenges

• What do you think are the greatest challenges facing CREATE businesses and their workforce in the region?

• Put a ★ by the **THREE** things that your group sees as the biggest challenges.

SLIDE #31**TIME: 25 MINUTES**

MATERIALS: FLIP CHART PAPER AND MARKERS FOR EACH TABLE, TIMER

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 32

INSTRUCTIONS

It is recommended that participants move or form into new table groups for the Round Three activity, however, the table facilitator will remain at the same table for this activity. As people settle into their new tables, quickly review the summary of strengths and challenges from Rounds One and Two.

ALT: VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS WILL NEED TO SWITCH GROUPS AT THIS POINT. FACILITATORS CAN STAY IN THE SAME GROUPS.

Options 1 (recommended): Review the summary of strengths and challenges from Rounds One and Two as one, large group, and then send folks into their new breakout rooms for Round 3

Option 2: Have breakout room facilitators share the summaries of Rounds One and Two with their group.

Draw attention to the Round Three question on the screen. Note that the question specifically draws from the responses of Round One and Two.

Facilitators may want to consider implementing some type of voting mechanism to ensure that everyone's voice is heard during each of the Three Rounds. For in-person events, the facilitator might implement voting by dots.

Alt: For sessions held via virtually, a poll, whiteboard, or other type of virtual voting mechanism could be utilized.

Use a fresh document to record brainstorming and the identified priority.

NOTE: THE "ONE" THING QUESTION UTILIZES APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY, AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT THAT HELPS PARTICIPANTS CONSIDER STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Round 3: Priorities



- Considering strengths and challenges, what is the **ONE** thing that can be accomplished by the CREATE BRIDGES project that would benefit your CREATE businesses and workforce?



SLIDE #32

TIME: 20 MINUTES

MATERIALS: SUMMARY CHARTS FROM ROUNDS 1 & 2 PLUS FLIP CHART PAPER & MARKERS FOR EACH TABLE, TIMER

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 33**INSTRUCTIONS**

Have tables report out the ONE thing identified in Round 3. Record these on a flipchart or whiteboard.



NOTE: WHILE IT SEEMS LIKE A SIMPLE TASK TO ASK TABLES TO REPORT OUT ONE THING THAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE CREATE BRIDGES PROJECT THAT WOULD BENEFIT YOUR CREATE BUSINESSES AND THEIR WORKFORCE, FACILITATORS SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR RESPONSES THAT ENCOMPASS MORE THAN ONE THING AS GROUPS OFTEN FIND IT DIFFICULT TO HOME IN ON ONE THING.

ALT: THE FACILITATOR OR ANOTHER IDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL CAN REPORT OUT FOR EACH GROUP.

The facilitator/presenter for the main group, can record these priorities using screen share.

Use a fresh document for recording priorities.

At the conclusion of this activity, thank the CREATE Forum participants for their contributions to the Group Discussion, and outline that the dialogue gathered during the CREATE Forum activity will be compiled into a report which will be shared with the RSC members, CREATE Forum attendees, and other community leaders. In addition, inform participants that the CREATE Forum Summary Report will be further analyzed during the CREATE Academy event.

Priorities Report Out

SLIDE #33

TIME: 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: FLIP CHART PAPER, MARKERS

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 34

INSTRUCTIONS

Have everyone fill out an evaluation form and future engagement form.



ALT: LINKS TO ELECTRONIC SURVEYS CAN BE DROPPED INTO THE CHAT AS WELL AS EMAILED TO PARTICIPANTS FOLLOWING THE MEETING.

Evaluation & Further Engagement

SLIDE #34

TIME: 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: PENS / PENCILS

HANDOUTS: CREATE FORUM EVALUATION AND
CREATE FORUM FUTURE INVOLVEMENT FORM

Slide 35

INSTRUCTIONS

Thank participants for coming and thank any invited guests and sponsors



SLIDE #35

TIME: 1 MINUTE

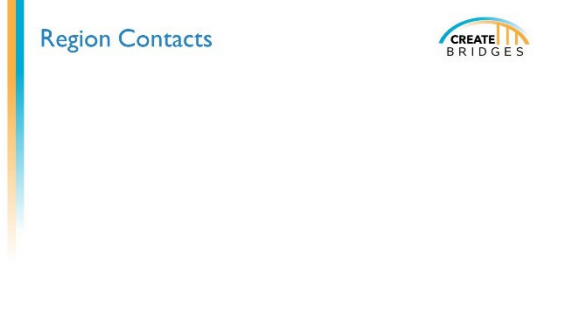
MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 36

INSTRUCTIONS

Optional slide with contact information for the project coordinator and/or RSC Co-Chairs involved in the CREATE BRIDGES project. Insert pictures, names, job titles, roles, contact information, etc., as applicable.



SLIDE #36

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE

Slide 37

INSTRUCTIONS

Optional slide with contact information for the University Extension project team leaders. Insert pictures, names, job titles, roles, contact information, etc., as applicable.

University Extension
Project Team Contacts



SLIDE #37

TIME: 1 MINUTE

MATERIALS: NONE

HANDOUTS: NONE



RESOURCES

- CREATE Forum Sign in Sheet—Have this accessible as participants arrive
- CREATE Forum Table Facilitator Discussion Questions Page
- CREATE Forum Evaluation
- CREATE Forum Future Involvement Sign Up Sheet
- CREATE Forum Event Preparation Checklist—This is for the coordinator’s use in preparing for the Forum
- CREATE Forum Invitation Template—This is an optional promotion tool
- CREATE Forum Presentation Slides
- CREATE Forum Resource Listing Wall Template Blank
- Business and Resource Listing Wall Activity Examples—This document provides examples of completed Resource Listings
- CREATE Forum Evaluation Checklist—This is for the coordinator’s use in preparing for the Forum

NEXT STEPS

- It is not recommended that you provide CREATE Forum Event participants with a copy of the CREATE Forum PowerPoint Presentation slide deck in advance or at the CREATE Forum event. However, you might consider sending them a copy of the presentation after the event.
- Program facilitators should follow-up with CREATE Forum participants that completed a CREATE Forum Future Involvement Form.
- For virtual events, it may be required to send out links to the CREATE Forum Sign-In Sheet, the CREATE Forum Evaluation and the CREATE Forum Future Involvement sign-up sheet. See CREATE Forum Evaluation Checklist for suggestions of additional to-do's that might be applicable to a virtual event.
- **NOTE: AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CREATE FORUM EVENT, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR COMPILE THE CREATE FORUM SESSION NOTES INTO A DOCUMENT THAT CAN BE SHARED WITH RSC MEMBERS, CREATE FORUM PARTICIPANTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, ETC. THIS DOCUMENT COULD BE COMPILED AS A CREATE FORUM SUMMARY REPORT WHICH INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:**
 - XX Total Participants over the X Session(s). XX unique participants including XX CREATE BRIDGES Regional Steering Committee members and XX Community Members representing XX Counties included in the CREATE BRIDGES project area.
 - **Strengths** (consider reporting on the strengths identified) *
 - **Challenges**
 - **Priorities** (Using Strengths to Overcome Challenges)
 - *While not a requirement, when preparing the CREATE Forum Summary Report, program facilitators may consider reporting on the Strengths identified using the Community Capitals Framework – Natural, Cultural, Human, Social, Political, Built, and Financial.
- Program Facilitators may choose to issue a news release after the CREATE Forum event to generate excitement and to motivate participants and the RSC members as they move into the next phase of the process.
- The next phase of the process includes Business Retention & Expansion and Employee Engagement

APPENDIX

